

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7527

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 3777

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MX

SUBJ: HIDALGO STATE AND PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

REF: MEXICO 3685

BEGIN SUMMARY: HIDALGO GOVERNOR KICKED OUT AS EXPECTED. EPISODE CLEARLY IS VICTORY FOR MOYA PALENCIA, BUT LESS CLEARLY A SETBACK FOR PRESIDENCY SECRETARY CERVANTES DEL RIO. END SUMMARY.

1. PERMANENT COMMISSION OF MEXICAN CONGRESS (15 DEPUTIES, 14 SENATORS) UNANIMOUSLY VOTED APRIL 29 THAT POWERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HIDALGO HAD "DISAPPEARED". COMMISSION THEN NOMINATED HIDALGO SENATOR RAUL LOZANO RAMIREZ AS PROVISIONAL GOVERNOR, PENDING NEW ELECTIONS. WEALTH OF PRESS REPORTS APRIL 30 NEGLECT TO MENTION HOW TECHNICALITY DESCRIBED PARA 5 REF (THAT PACHUCA MAYOR WAS IN LINE TO SUCCEED) WAS OVERCOME.

2. FORMER GOVERNOR SANCHEZ VITE AND GOVERNOR ONTONIEL MIRANDA WERE UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENTS; THEY MAY BE IN HIDING UNTIL GOM DECIDES WHETHER TO BRING CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST THEM. MIRANDA WAS GOVERNOR FOR ONLY 29 DAYS.

3. REVIEWING SALIENT POINTS OF THIS EPISODE:

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(A) THEN GOVERNOR OF HIDALGO SANCHEZ VITE LAST SEPT 28

DECLARED THAT MOYA PALENCIA WAS TRYING TO PRESENT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA WITH THE FAIT ACCOMPLI OF HIS CANDIDACY AND THAT SANCHEZ VITE WOULD NOT PERMIT MOYA TO IMPOSE A GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE IN HIDALGO.

(B) IN LATE OCTOBER THE PRI DID NOMINATE AS ITS CANDIDATE ONTONIEL MIRANDA, A SANCHEZ VITE FOLLOWER, WHO WON THE ELECTION AGAINST NO OPPOSITION;

(C) MIRANDA IN HIS APRIL 1 INAUGURAL ADDRESS ATTACKED THE SECRETARIAT OF AGRARIAN REFORM;

(D) ON APRIL 10-11, THREE PAID POLITICAL ADS FROM HIDALGO CHAPTERS OF THE PRI AGRARIAN AND POPULAR SECTORS AND NATIONAL TEACHERS UNION ATTACKED SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT MOYA PALENCIA (PRINCIPALLY), SOCIAL SECURITY DIRECTOR GALVEZ BETANCOURT, AND AGRARIAN REFORM SECRETARY GOMEZ VILLANUEVA.

(E) WEEK OF APRIL 22-29 CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN CULMINATED IN ANARCHY IN PACHUCA, HIDALGO STATE CAPITAL, AND DECLARATION BY PERMANENT COMMISSION OF "DISAPPEARANCE" OF GOVERNOR'S POWERS.

4. COMMENT:

(A) AS A MINIMUM, OUSTER OF MIRANDA IS VICTORY FOR SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT MOYA PALENCIA, THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF ATTACKS FROM HIDALGO.

(B) THERE IS INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT PRESIDENCY SECRETARY CERVANTES DEL RIO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH SANCHEZ VITE. WHATEVER THE FACTS, IF KEY POLITICAL FIGURES AND INTEREST GROUPS PERCEIVED HIDALGO EPISODE AS MOYA-CERVANTES STRUGGLE (SOME OBSERVERS HAVE), THEN CERVANTES HAS SUFFERED A DEVASTATING SET-BACK TO HIS PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS. WE HOPE TO GET REACTION ON THIS POINT.

(C) PRESIDENTIAL CHANCES OF GOVERNMENT SECRETARY MOYA PALENCIA NOW LOOK STRONGER THAN EVER. BUT: INTEREST OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IS TO KEEP POLITICIANS GUESSING (OTHERWISE HE BECOMES CONFIDENTIAL

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LAME DUCK), SO MOYA MAY NOT HAVE CLEAR SAILING YET.
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